THE F.B. I. - SCOTLAND YARD - NORTHWEST MOUNTED - SECRET SERVICE,

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No. 4

RED LETTER DAY

SEE NEXT PAGE





RED LETTER DAY

by Gardner F. Fox

THE envelope came first, brought by the mailman. It bore a stamp and the familiar seal of the local post office. After the envelope—came death!

Karen Larsen crumpled to the floor of her big desert home when she saw it. In the upper left-hand corner were the words: Death, Inc. and beneath them, the odd imprint of the weird skullface with the hollow, haunting eyesockets. A shaft of sunlight played across it, touched the quivering mouth of the frightened girl, shadowed the sahuaro cactus in the tiled courtyard.

Lee San. her Chinese cook, came running on padded feet "Missy sick? Me help Missy her room?"

"No, Lee. Just tell Edouard to get the car out. I'm going into town—to the F.B.I.!"

Special agent Jim Fallon was at Karen Larsen's side that night as she reentered the patio of the sprawling desert hacienda. A big yellow moon flooded the splashing waters of the statued fountain. In the distance a horse whinnied. A lizard slithered over tile.

"One hour to go," the girl whispered. "One hour . . . before I die!"

"Miss Larsen, you will not die. I promise you that!"

She whirled on him. The moonbeams fell on her quivering lips, on the red-nailed fingers she clasped on her handbag. "How can you tell me that? You know what Death. Inc. can do! Eleven killings in the past year. Bought and paid for by—whom? Men who'll kill another man for fifty dollars! For someone who is never seen!

"They always send those death's-head letters And on the day those letters are delivered, the person for whom they are meant—dies! Every time They've never failed! Why will I be the exception?"

Her fingernails dug deep into Jim Fallon's arm as she bit off a scream with her white

teeth. Seemingly all around them, from fountain and tiles and roof—rose the haunting laughter of a madman! It mocked them. taunted their puny efforts.

taunted their puny efforts.
"You see?" the girl cried wildly, eyes searching his. "They're all around us. They can kill me whenever they want. They aren't human. They're devils . . . or ghosts . . . !"

Jim Fallon held her up with hands under her elbows. He snapped his speech short, hoping to jab her into courage. "You agreed to this. You said you'd help me catch them. I could have kept you overnight in safety, with a dozen guards. But you agreed that I couldn't let you stay there forever. That someday they'd get you...alone... unprotected!"

"Yes," she whimpered, shuddering. "Yes.."
"All right, then. Keep your chin up, and let's
go get 'em!"

Fallon spoke with an assurance he was far from feeling. The strangely quiet hacienda, the glowing moon, the eerie silence after that wild laughter, ran cold ripples of tension down his back. He put his hand on his service revolver under his coat and felt better.

Karen Larsen said, "They want to kill me because my newspaper scoop sent Rat Marley to the chair. And they're afraid that I'll stumble onto their own murder ring and have them sent up!"

Footsteps sounded in the darkness, then faded. Karen cried out. "Lee San, is that you? Lee! Oh. Lee!"

There was only the moonlight and the stillness to answer her. Fallon lifted his gun out of the holster and held it in front of him as he walked forward into a little tiled alleyway between two of the hacienda buildings. Kare followed him.

He could hear her footsteps, tap-tap-taping . . .

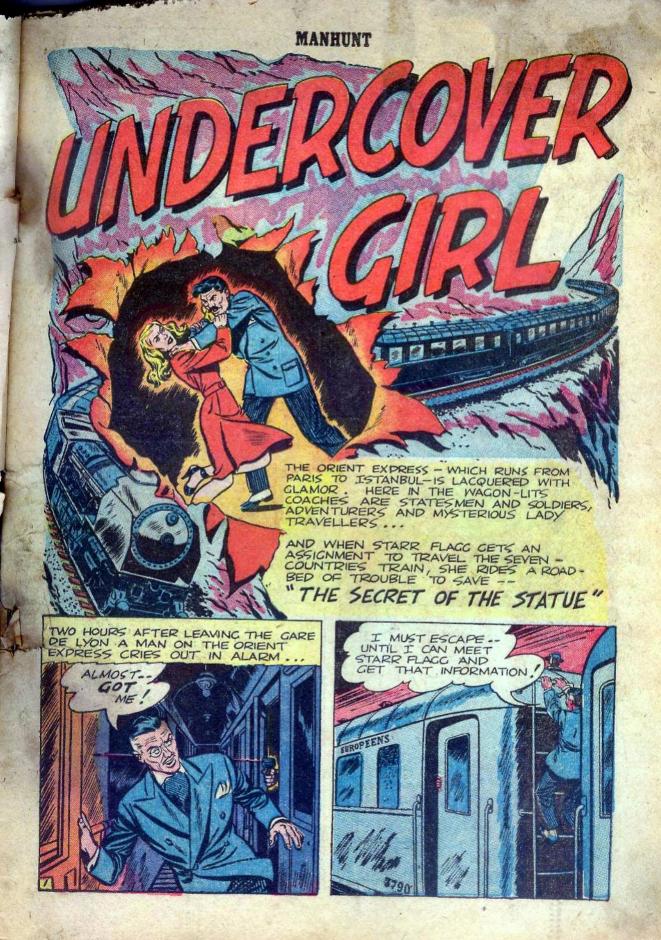
She choked, gurgled . . .

Fallon whirled. A noose had dropped silently from the sloping roof . . . was tight about her throat . . . was lifting her upwards into the air!

The Federal agent leaped. His gun dropped as he jumped for the rope above the girl's head. He caught it, swung about on it, tugging down. The girl crumpled on the tile as he dragged the noose downward, slowly, inexorably. She clawed at the noose, loosening it. He could hear her gulping in air through lips that were bright red in a suddenly bloodless face.

The rope came away from its anchor. Fallon looked up. A man was falling from a flat roof, one end of the rope still in his right hand. His left hand held an automatic. The gun spit red flame and lead at Fallon.

(Continued on inside back cover)









IN A PRIVATE COACH --





































THE CREAT STALLION STOPS SUDDENLY.
HE LIFTS HIS HEAD AND WHINNIES
SHRILLY. THEN, SLOWLY, HE PITCHES
FORWARD...



LUCKY FOR THE KREMLIN I AM THE BEST SHOT IN THE ARMY. IT WAS NO EASY TASK TO KILL THAT CALLOPING HORSE!

ALL RUSSIA WILL THANK YOU -- IF THE AMERIKANSKI KNOWS THE SECRET OF THE



HOW DO YOU OPEN THAT STATUE?

WHY--COULDN'T YOU FIGURE THAT



MATTER OF CALLANAW?
MATTER OF VAXINALLA?
FRANTURING THE OH-ER-YES.
HAVISILE THEN UN. OH-ER-YES. HAVISILE, THEN UN-SCRANING THE CALLANAW, YOU PLEASE CO ON. IT'S SO SIMPLE . FOLLOW ME ? IT THE WAY ISN'T ANY SNAPISIDE YOU PUT BUT THE PRINTING ITI IS VAXINALLA



IP I CAN HOLD THEM WITH THIS DOUBLE-TALK LONG ENOUGH, I MAY BE ABLE TO WRIGGLE OUT OF THIS



THING ANYTHING I'LL PEMONSTRATE WHAT I MEAN. I NEED A POW MUST NOT CHEMICALE PULL





MUU













SPACE OCCUPANTIVE SERVICE SPACE SPA

































HE KNOWS THOSE BIG GAME PLANETS PLENTY WELL. HAS A HUNTING LODGE ON KAPSA...THATS WHERE I'M HEADING! HE'LL CUT AND RUN THERE.







STRUGGLING MADLY, HIGH ABOVE THE GAUNT TREE-TOPS, JET BLACK WRITHES AS THE DEADLY POISON SEEPS THROUGH HIS BODY...



















I HEARD THE SCREAMS OF THE MARSH PANTHER AND CAME WITH MY GRAVITY BELT ON AT FULL. GLAD I DID NOW YOU'LL COME BACK WITH ME BROADCAST OVER SPACE VOX THAT YOU KILLED ME IN THE LINE OF DUTY!

THE PATROL WILL MARK ME UP AS DEAD. I'LL RETURN TO MARS PORT AND HAVE MY FACE ALTERED, THEN VISIT FAN SAN-AND THIS TIME I WON'T FAIL!



I STOLE THE NEVERFADE EMERALDS FROM EARTH. I PUT THEM IN FAN SAN'S DANCING COSTUME INSTEAD OF THE GREEN GLASS THAT ORNAMENTS



SET WHIRLS, SUDDENLY KICKS ... A SEGMENT OF MUD FLIES OUT AND PLOPS IN TREAK'S FACE! THIS OOZY MARSH MUD IS LOOSE AND GLOPPY! IT WILL HIDE ME FROM YOU -

MAYBE

50, BUT

JUS7 THE

SAME

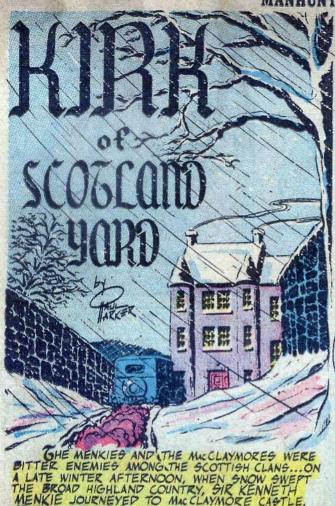
LONG ENOUGH FOR ME TO PUT THE "CRUSHER" ON YOU!

WE'LL USE HIS GRAVITY BELT TO GET US SAFELY TO OUR SPACER AFTER THAT, ITS MARS PORT AND JAIL FOR HIM, IT ENDED HAPPILY, JAK TAL! LIKE THE ANIMALS HE'S CAPTURED, TREAK'LL GO BEHIND



I'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO LOOK AT ANOTHER ANIMAL CRACKER!





JUST BECAUSE I'M ABOUT TA FORECLOSE ON THIS CASTLE ISNA REASON THEY SHOULDN'T TAKE ME IN OUT OF THE STORRM.

HA! TIS I WOULDNA STEP O'ER YER POORSILL BUT THA STORRM IS GITTIN' SO BAD! I'M LIABLE TA KENNETH MENKIE, ME OLD ENEMY . COME FRREEZE OUT-MAN

THE MENKIES AND THE MICLAYMORES WERE HITTER ENEMIES AMONG THE SCOTTISH CLANS...ON LATE WINTER AFTERNOON, WHEN SNOW SWEPT HE BROAD HIGHLAND COUNTRY, SIR KENNETH AENKIE JOURNEYED TO MICCLAYMORE CASTLE, DEGIN THE STRANGE TALE OF...



STAY THE NIGHT AN' BE GONE IN THE MORNING! TIS NOT EVEN A DOG "D TURN OUT IN THIS WEATHER! I'LL STAY-ONLY THAT YE BOLT THE DOORS
AN' WINDOWS AN' SHUT
ME IN HERE IN SAFETY,
I'M NOT TRUSTIN' A
MACCLAYMORE WITH ME LIFE!







ALL SCOTTISH
CLANS HAVE FAERIES,
JUST AS THE IRISH,
HAVE BANGHEES.
THE FAERY PROTECTS
THE FAMILY FROM
HARM...HE'S
EVEN SUPPOSED
TO

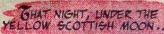


HOURS LATER, BEYOND THE BORDER, AT MACCLAYMORE CASTLE ...

EXACTLY AS WE LEFT IT, INSPECTOR LOCKED... NO ONE COULD CLIMB DOWN OR GO UP THE CHIMNEY... NO POSSIBLE WAY TO ENTER THE LAY!





























DISGOLVED INTO THE



AND WE DON'T HAVE A SINGLE CLUE TO GO -TOO DARK TO SEE HIM AND HE SEEMS TO HAVE COVERED HIS TRAIL FROM THE SHACK .



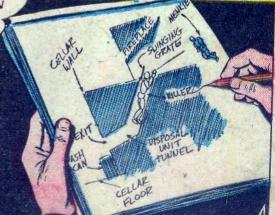
Q FEW MINUTES LATER, IN THE MURDER ROOM. BUT I DON'T SEE ANYTHING

WRONG ..

NO, BUT YOU SEE THIS ASHES - DISPOSAL UNIT? THE ASHES ARE SWEPT DOWN THERE... TO THE CELLAR! A PERSON COULD LIE IN THAT UNIT—THE RUST A GUN THROUGH THE SWINGING

KIRK SKETCHES RAPIDLY ILLUSTRATING THE WAY THE KILLER SHOT INTO A LOCKED AND BOLTED ROOM-KILLING KENNETH MENKIE!





IN THE CELLAR ...

I CAN'T FIT IN THERE, BUT, YOU CAN! THEREFORE,















THE KILLER HAD TO BE SMALL ASH-DISPOSAL UNIT... HE HAD TO KNOW THE CASTLE TO BE AWARE THERE WAS SUCH A THING... HE HAD TO BE STRONG TO PUT UP A FIGHT WITH ME, AND TO RUN FAST ACROSS THE MOOR AS



SIR IAN WAS TOO LARGE AND CLUMSY ... PEG, HIS DAUGHTER, DOESN'T HAVE THE STRENGTH! THAT LEAVES LOOK! THE FAMILY SERVANT-SHEPHERD! AWAY!



ACROSS THE SNOW-COVERED MOOR AND INTO THE CRASS OF BONNIE DELL GO THE KILLER AND HIS PURSUER ..



ON TOP OF A NARROW, TABLE-TOP ROCK, KIRK STRUGGLES DESPERATELY WITH THE WRY KILLER.



THE MANIACAL FURY OF SHEPHERD GIVES HIM ADDED STRENGTH ... A WILDLY SWINGING FIST SENDS INSPECTOR KIRK REELING —











HE ECHOES STILL LASH FROM WOODS TO WATER, BUT THE RED-COATED FORM OF SERGEANT JEFFREY FOX NEVER STIRS ...



PESTE! I CANNOT SEE WHETHER THERE IS A WOUND BECAUSE OF THAT CURSED RED COAT HE WEARS. I'LL HAVE TO GO CLOSER ---



HE LOOKS DEAD ENOUGH, BUT I MUST MAKE SURE, THE PEACE RIVER BREEDS ARE COUNTING --- PESTE! IT'S THE RED FOX!!



TH A MUFFLED CURSE, THE HALF-BREED RAISES HIS RIFLE JUST AS THE RED FOX WHIRLS ASIDE AND HIS RIGHT HAND HURLS HIS STIFF-BRIMMED HAT FLYING ---





RAOUL METIS! FUR-STEALER, SQUAW-BEATER AND GEN-ERAL ALL-AROUND TROUBLE-MAKER! WHY AREN'T YOU ON PEACE RIVER WHERE YOU BELONG?



THEN I'LL TELL YOU!
REPORTS CAME IN TO
THE FORT THAT THE
BLACKFOOT INDIANS
UP HERE WERE GETTING
RESTLESS. CLAIMED
THEIR FURS WERE
BEING STOLEN. I WAS
ON MY WAY UP TO
TALK TO CORNSTALK,
THEIR CHIEF!



YOU AND YOUR BREEDS STOLE THE FURS. YOU WANTED THE INDIANS TO REBEL SO THE MOUNTIES WOULD PUNISH THEM. YOU FIGURED YOU'D MOVE IN ON THEIR FUR COUNTRY THEN...



A HEAD OF THE SCARLET STALKER, A BLACK-EYED INDIAN CROUCHES, TWIG AND ROPE IN HAND.

MOUNTIE POLICEMAN COME WITH PRISONER. NO WANT MOUNTIE FIND CORNSTALK AND BRAVES READY FOR WARPATH. FIX RABBIT-



HIM NOT SEE NOOSE UNTIL TOO LATE.
SAPLING RELBASED, GO BACK UPRIGHT. PULL
OF SAPLING BREAK MOUNTIE'S NECK!



YES ON HIS PRISONER, THE RED FOX DOES NOT SEE THE CUNNINGLY CONCEALED LOOP.

IF THERE WERE SOME WAY OF GETTING CORNSTALK TO COME TO FORT MACLEOD, I'D PUT A
CRIMP IN YOUR PLAN! FUR-BUYERS FROM SE
ENGLAND ARE
DUE THERE
ANY DAY....







BUT IF WE GO UGH! THEY WILL
SEE JUSTICE
DONE TO CORNSTALK'S TRIBE!
ANYHOW! GO BRING ME BODY
OF MOUNTIE. I TAKE
LIM TO FORT, TELL LIM
INSPECTOR WE SORRY!



I'M NO GHOST! WHEN THE LOOP TIGHTENED AROUND MY THROAT, I SUPPED MY FEET FREE OF MY STIRRUPS ALMOST INSTINCTIVELY...



THE NOOSE DREW ME UP
INTO THE AIR, BUT I GOT MY
FEET ON MY MOUNT'S BACK
AND KICKED UPWARD! THIS
LOOSENED THE PRESSURE
ON MY THROAT.







A WELL-PLACED BULLET WILL SHEAR THE ROPE IN HALF



THE BULLET DID ITS WORK, MY
THROAT'S STILL SORE AND MY
PRISONER GOT AWAY... BUT
IF YOU'LL COME TO THE FORT
WITH YOUR BEST FURS, I'LL
FORGET WHAT HAPPENED!

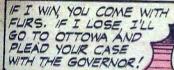
MY BRAVES THINK FUR DISPLAY IS FOR SOUNWEN!



STRONG BLACKFOOT MEN NOT BRING FURS. THAT WHAT YOU CALL "SISSY" STUFF! WE STAY HERE!

SISSY STUFF, HUH?
TELL YOU WHAT...
YOU BRING ON
YOUR BEST FIGHTER
AND I'LL MEET HIM
HAND TO HAND!





THAT GOOD BET. HEAVY -HAND! YOU COME FIGHT



DWARFED BY THE GIGANTIC BLACKFOOT WRESTLER, THE RED FOX FACES OFF IN THE ROPE CIRCLE, KNOWING HE MUST WIN OR RESIGN FROM THE FORCE!

I'LL BE A LAUGHING STOCK IF I LOSE!



GO OUT AND CLOSE ON THE WRITHING MOUNTIE! TOO LATE, THE RED FOX IS TRAPPED IN ARMS AS STRONG AS THOSE OF A KODIAK BEAR!

GOT TO --- WORK FREE. HE'LL BREAK MY BACK -- IF I -- DON'T!



GOOD THING I REMEMBERED THE WRESTLING TRICKS THEY TAUGHT ME AT REGINA





EAVYHAND THUMPS DOWN INTO A COOKING POT. HIS HOWLS OF PAIN AS THE BOILING WATER SEARS HIM BRING SMILES TO THE FACES OF HIS TRIBESMEN....



LE REYMARD ROUGE
IS STILL THE GREATEST
MAN IN THE NORTH.
CORNSTALK WILL BRING
HIS WARRIORS TO
THE FORT!



TEN GIRLS! SACRE NO, NO! YOU HAVE IT ALL WRONG! CORN-BLEU! YOU DO NOT LOVE YOUR BARBE, HEIN ? STALK'S BRINGING TEN GIRLS! HIS TRIBE AND EES EET THAT THEIR BEST FURS YOU WANT TO TO THE FORT, I START ZEE WANT THE GIRLS TO AREM ? MODEL THEM ... SO THE BLIYERS WILL BE IMPRESSED!

THE BUYERS WILL GIVE
THE INDIANS A CONTRACT! RAOUL METIS
WILL NOT DARE INVADE
THE CHIEF'S FUR
GROUNDS THEN. BIG
BUSINESS WOULD
KICK TO THE GOVERNMENT!



BARBE TOUTAIN, A LURKING FIGURE LISTENS AT THE WINDOW ---

OH! BLIT IF I STEAL THE FURS BEFORE THE GIRLS MODEL THEM...PESTE! THAT WILL GIVE M'SIEU SERGEANT FOX THE BLACK













METIS! SO YOU THOUGHT



MY DARLEENG! HOWEVER







OF THE

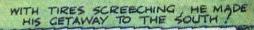


HIS FACE FRAMED IN THE TELESCOPIC SIGHTS
OF A MAN-KILLING DESPERADO'S RIFLE, JIM
FALLON PUSHES ON RELENTLESSLY THROUGH
THE SWAMP COUNTRY OF THE SOUTHLAND.
EVERY STEP HE TAKES BRINGS HIM DEEPER
INTO THE MYSTERIOUS BAYOUS, AND TO A
TRAGIC RENDEZVOUS WITH

THE GIRL AND THE GORILLA

THIS WAS THE GORILLA -- MAD MIKE MAKLE-AS HE SHOT HIS WAY OUT OF THE SCENIC NATIONAL BANK

I'LL MAKE 'EM PAY FOR SHOOTIN' BENNY AND GUS!



I GOT FIFTY GRAND ON ME --THREE AUTOMATICS AND MY RIFLE WITH THE TELESCOPIC SIGHTS ...



THE F.B.I., WITH JIM FALLON AT THE WHEEL, TOOK UP THE CHALLENGE.

HE'S HEADING INTO THE BAYOUS. WE CAN'T GO IN THERE, EXCEPT ON FOOT. SO LET'S START



AS THE G-MEN ENTER THE BAYOUS, A RIFLE CRACKED -

HE GOT ME , JIM ! THROUGH THE CHEST. BILL BREATHE CAN'T













AS JIM FALLON WHIRLED TO APPLY HIS WRESTLING GRIP, HIS FOOT SLIPPED ON A WET SPOT OF GRASS AND HE LUNGED FORWARD, TO FALL ACAINST THE BOLE OF A BIG TREE







I'M MIKE MAKLE, CUTE STUFF. BUT WHAT'S A NUMBER LIKE YOU DOIN' IN THIS JUNGLE?

I LIVE HERE, I HAVE NO PEOPLE. ALWAYS I HAVE LIVED ALONE. SWELL! ME'N YOU'LL GET ALONG OKAY. JUST TAKE ME TO THAT PLACE YOU LIVE!

MAN --- I DO NOT LIKE MEN!



THAT NIGHT, AS THE SOUTH-ERN MOON RISES HIGH ABOVE THE MAIDEN CANE AND CYPRESS ---

IT'S NO USE. I'LL NEVER FIND HIM HERE. HE CAN BE MILES AWAY, WALKING THROUGH THE WATER, LEAVING NO FOOTPRINTS!







NONE OF YOUR

















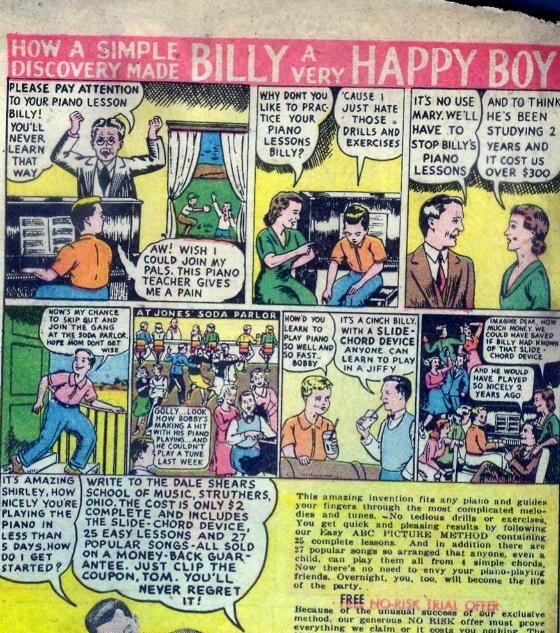












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NAME Address CITYSTATE Jim dropped the rope, jumped for his gun His hunting hand found it, lifted it. Bent at the knees, body leaning forward as he had been trained, he sent bullet after bullet through the night—into the man who had hit the ground less than ten feet from him!

A bullet ricochetted from the stucco wall behind him. Another ripped the sleeve of his

coat.

And then the man in front of him tumbled forward, his chest a red smear where the G-man's bullets had etched a pattern. He made a sodden sound on the tile as he fell. His automatic clanged

Jim went forward, turned him over. He glanced at his face and muttered, "Tiny Taccio, one of Red Febler's mob. That ties in to what we already know about Death. Inc."

Karen was breathing easier, her head leaning back against the wall. She smiled bravely. "If you hadn't been here——" she closed her eyes and shivered.

"We've beaten them, at any rate," the G-man smiled, looking down at his wristwatch. "Ten minutes to midnight, and their killer's dead."

Fallon did not see the hard eyes that gazed at them from a little window. He did not hear the man as he moved away on rubber-soled shoes, nor did he hear the slither of the long-ded knife slipping from its sheath.

For a moment the man stood in a beam of moonlight, his finger touching the tip of the stiletto, his hard lips curving in a cruel smile.

He murmured, "I'll have to kill them both, now. The G-man knows too much, already."

The man slid around a corner of the room and crept silently down the long flight of stairs.

Karen was on her feet, now. She breathed slowly, forcing herself to be calm by sheer will-power. She whispered, "There isn't anything more to be afraid of. Nothing more. You killed the man they sent."

Fallon patted her hand. "I killed him . . . but it's you that I'm thanking for the chance. Without your help, I couldn't have brought Tiny down. We—the F. B. I.—know he's a member of the Febler gang. I've a hunch we can make Red sing when we track him down."

Karen shuddered. "That awful Death, Inc. . . . every time I think of them, I see red!"
"Red letter day," said Fallon grimly. "A letter . . . then creeping death . . . then red blood."

It had been that way since the beginning when Death, Inc. had made their first killing. A mailman brought a letter to a wealthy man, and after that the killer came, slipping through a cordon of police as though he were invisible. Two more deaths followed in that first year. There were four the second year.

Death. Inc. grew bolder. Eleven was their total in their third year. Now they were

starting again. . . .

Fallon had an arm under her elbow, walking with her to the hacienda gateway. He was saying. "— but all that's over, now. With this new information we have a chance to graf Febler and question him."

Something heavy flew through the air. It hit Karen on the back of her skull, toppling

her forward

From the corner of his eye, just before the arm tightened on his neck and the naked knife glittered in the air above his throat, Fallon saw the huge stone that had dropped the girl Blood on it and hair . . . a red letter day . . .

The knife came down and stabbed-

Fallon twisted in the mugging grip, frenziedly arching his back, driving down with his legs. He turned his body, got the knife in the shoulder-lapel of his coat. The knife drove through, cut into his shoulder. The man with the arm about his neck was panting sobbing with effort

The G-man dropped. He fell straight down and hit the tiled patio floor. But the mugger

was off-balance, and fell over him.

Fallon whirled and leaped. He parried the darting dagger with a wrist, slammed a left fist into the man's face. A beam of moonlight showed the other's features to the battling Federal agent. He grinned, "Mugger Marcotti!"

The Mugger cursed hotly and slammed a

knee at Fallon's jaw.

Fallon rolled free. He brought his right fist up in a short arc. It hit the Mugger under the jaw, snapped his head back until it touched his spine. The Mugger tried to scream but only a choked gurgle came out of his battered mouth. He went back and out.

Fallon whirled and knelt beside Karen. His hand touched the blood on her yellow hair. "Just a scratch." he breathed with relief. "But I'll take her to a doctor, to make sure."

Her eyes fluttered open, stared up at him. She whispered. "What . . . was it?"

He told her, gestured at the unconscious Mugger. She murmured, "The Mugger, yes. I've seen pictures of him in Rogue's Gallery!"

Fallon nodded, "This breaks the case for us. The Mugger is Red Febler's right-hand man, but he'll spill if we offer him immunity to turn State's evidence!"

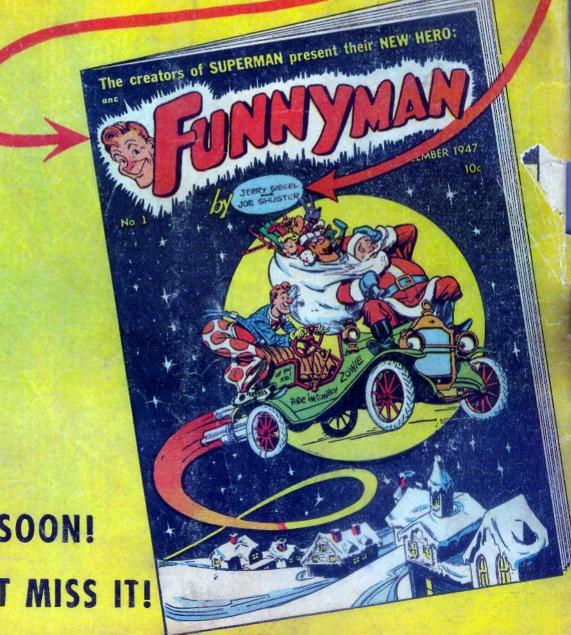
Karen's eyes shone brightly. "It's after midnight, Fallon! Death, Inc. has failed—for the first time."

"— And the last time!" Fallon added grimly. "From this night on there won't be any Death, Inc. Like all crime and criminals, it will fold up—because crime never pays!"

THE TALENTED TEAM THAT CREATED

Superman

present a brand new and completely different CRIME-FIGHTER...



OUT SOON! DON'T MISS IT!